



NCLIS

U.S. National Commission on
Libraries and Information Science

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**Meeting of the
U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science
May 16, 2003
South Valleys Branch Library
Reno Nevada**

These minutes report actions and summarize discussions occurring at the Commission meeting. A verbatim transcript of the meeting is maintained at the Commission office.

NCLIS Members: Martha Gould, Chairperson, Joan Challinor, Vice-Chairperson, Bobby Roberts, Jack Hightower, Robert Martin.

NCLIS Staff: Robert Willard, Executive Director; Madeleine McCain, Director of Operations

NCLIS Guests: Judith C. Russell, Superintendent of Documents U.S. Government Printing Office, Frank Partlow, Chief of Staff, U.S. Government Printing Office, Nancy Cummings, Director, Washoe County Library NV

Opening Remarks

After calling the meeting to order, Chairperson Gould welcomed those in attendance.

Chairperson's Report

As there were no draft minutes from the previous meeting (June 2002), Chairperson Gould deferred the approval of the minutes to the next meeting. She also indicated that for the current meeting there would be no Chairperson's Report, although she was happy to note that the Commission, while in something of a "holding pattern," has been working on budgets and organizing good interactions with the Government Printing Office and

with the Institute for Museum and Library Services. She also noted that it would appear that reauthorization “is moving ahead and, hopefully, at a fairly rapid pace.”

Chairperson Gould also noted that as the Commission did not have a quorum for the meeting, any action items would require the Commission to recess and reconvene as the Executive Committee, as the Executive Committee is empowered to take action when necessary.

Commissioners’ Activities Reports

Commissioner Challinor reported that she had been working on the preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society meetings, which is being organized through ICSECA (International Contributions to Scientific Educational and Cultural Activities), scheduled for Prague and Geneva, later in the year. Commissioner Challinor also reported on the Trust and Terror program, and the Commissioners discussed the projects.

Commissioner Martin reported that, while it is difficult to distinguish his activity as director of IMLS from his activities as Commissioner, he has been involved in the legislative work on reauthorization which, as noted, seems to be improving fairly rapidly.

Executive Director’s Report

Mr. Willard began the financial report by commending Director of Operations Madeleine McCain for organizing the report to provide information describing the Commission’s financial activities during the past fiscal year (since October 1st 2002), as well as providing projections about where the Commission will be at the end of the year. After noting that all Commissioners had received the report that went to the House Appropriations Committee, Mr. Willard described how effort had been made to have some of the NCLIS unfunded items included in the special authorization for the establishment of the Homeland Defense Project because those appropriations were going through fairly quickly. That effort unfortunately was not successful.

Chairperson Gould complimented Mr. Willard on the “incredible job” he did in transmitting the budget to the Appropriations Committee, and Mr. Willard, in turn, noted that he “couldn’t have done it without the work” of Ms. McCain and (at the time) Deputy Director Judith Russell.

International Activities

Several Commissioners described their work in the international library community. Chairperson Gould described her work in China, where the library community in the United States is looked to, particularly for advice about management, strategic planning, and similar subjects. Commissioner Challinor spoke about the Commission’s valuable work with IFLA and, as noted above, with the World Summit on the Information Society.

Mr. Willard commented that just the previous week, five or six librarians from Bosnia had visited the Commission offices, yet another example of the value of these one-on-one meetings with small delegations from other countries, and comment was made about Commissioner Challinor's work with groups of librarians from Ecuador and Beijing.

Statistics and Surveys

Executive Director Willard described the Library Statistics Cooperative Program, under Dr. Molyneaux's direction, in which the Commission works with the National Center for Education Statistics. Mr. Willard remarked that the program focuses on the use of statistics and on their utility, particularly with the creation of data sets that can be used in the teaching environment.

Government Printing Office

Mr. Partlow spoke to the Commission to express his gratitude to the Commission, and to Chairperson Gould in particular, for supporting his move to his present position, and also to recognize how valuable Judith Russell is as the Superintendent of Documents.

Mr. Partlow expressed his thanks to NCLIS and to the staff of NCLIS for all of their assistance and, on Bruce James' behalf, took the occasion to remind the Commission that what he and Mr. James were trying to do is, simply put, to take the Government Printing Office from the 19th Century to the 21st Century "all in one jump." Since he would have responsibility for that effort, Mr. Partlow noted that he would be searching far and wide for assistance, and he would be calling on NCLIS in soliciting the help of the library community.

On that subject, Mr. Martin commented that "as you may know, I do have a few lines of communication to the library community.... The Public Printer and the Superintendent of Documents have done a great deal to inspire confidence in the library community that things are on the right track."

Superintendent of Documents

Chairperson Gould welcomed Judith Russell and invited her to describe her work for the Commissioners. Ms. Russell began her remarks by stating that she and the Public Printer are in agreement that there are a number of ways in which they will work tangibly with NCLIS. She suggested that one area where the two agencies might work together is in the matter of historical statistics on libraries, and looking at a need to do significant digitization of the historical collections in the depositories. She suggested that the effort might be "a sort of a coordination function," trying to establish ways to set up and

coordinate specifications and standards so that materials can be shared, and to ensure that whatever the libraries that digitize do with that information, to ensure that it is managed for permanent public access. Ms. Russell also spoke about the enormous amount of historical material that includes tabular and statistical data serials, and the difficulties associated with digitizing that material. As she put it, “To state the challenge that we're facing: how do we digitize statistics in such a way that we don't take a picture of a table, but we rather actually enter a numeric that somebody can export and manipulate? We see the potential there for partnership with NCES and NCLIS and GPO because all of us have ownership of a piece of that.”

Following Ms. Russell's presentation, Mr. Martin offered his agreement, noting that with the pending reauthorization bills, expected to be passed, IMLS is going to be given a new responsibility to report annually to Congress on trends and issues affecting libraries and museums, and reliable and timely data will be required for providing that information. He remarked that he is grateful that there is, for the library “side” of his work, a foundation on which to build. Mr. Martin noted that he welcomes the opportunity to “explore with NCLIS ... [and] think in terms of GPO being a partner in bringing their expertise and infrastructure into the process.” Mr. Martin concluded by stating that he and his colleagues at IMLS are looking forward to the agencies working together, to determine “how we might best put our resources together.”

Adjournment

With no further business to bring before the Commission, Chairperson Gould adjourned the meeting at 11:40 a.m.